

**BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
Park and Recreation Department
Conference Room, 11th Floor, City Hall
Monday, August 15, 2005
3:30 p.m.**

Present: Dennis Brunner, John Kemp, Doug Leeper, Glen Dey, Janet Miller, and Mick Tranbarger

Absent: Cherylane Adams

Also Present: Doug Kupper, Larry Hoetmer, Tim Martz, and Maryann Crockett (staff)

First Vice President Miller called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m.

PUBLIC AGENDA

No Items.

REGULAR AGENDA

1. **On motion by Dey, second by Kemp, the minutes of the July 11, 2005, meeting were reviewed and approved unanimously.**
2. **Election of Officers – Nominating Committee.** First Vice President Miller explained that the Board would hold elections for President, First Vice President and Second Vice President at the September 10, 2005, meeting. She said she was requesting that Second Vice President Glen Dey and Park Commissioner Dennis Brunner serve on a nominating committee to develop a slate of officers. She requested that they poll all board members regarding their interest in serving as a Board officer. She commented that duties of the President include chairing the meetings and assisting Park staff set the agenda. She said she is now serving in that capacity since the former President's term expired. She explained that basically, the First and Second Vice Presidents chair the Board meetings in the absence of the President.

First Vice President Miller also requested that board members provide her a list of items of interest or issues they would like to see placed on the September agenda, as well as future agendas.

On motion by Dey, second by Leeper, IT WAS VOTED UNANIMOUSLY that Glen Dey and Dennis Brunner serve on the Nominating Committee.

3. **Capital Plan Improvement (CIP) Presentation.** Director Kupper commented that staff had a Power Point presentation that reflected what has been accomplished with CIP and other funding in 2005. He said the 2005-2014 CIP had been approved by the City Council and that it would be discussed at the September 10th Park Board orientation/meeting.

Director Kupper introduced Larry Hoetmer, Landscape Architect. Mr. Hoetmer began the presentation by explaining that in addition to the approximately \$2.5 - \$5 million in CIP funds, the

Department also received funding from Community Development Block Grants (CDBG); the Community Lake Assistance Program (CLAP) administered by the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP) which supported development of area lakes and the urban fishing program; and Land Water Conservation Funds (LWCF) which were federal monies also administered by the KDWP that supported development of projects like the skatepark and area soccer fields.

Mr. Hoetmer briefly reviewed playground renovations stating that approximately \$538,000 has been spent on updating and upgrading playgrounds. He said 65 of the 71 playgrounds in the City system have been completely or partially renovated. In addition, he said the City was experimenting with new and innovative play equipment such as the space nets at Stearman, Claude Lambe and Planeveiw Parks; the "climbing rock" at the Meadows Park; and interactive water fountains at Fairmount and Osage Parks. He reviewed slides and mentioned several projects including installation of safety surfacing at Aley, West Douglas and Lincoln Parks; the new playground equipment and "themed" structures at Grove Park (he also mentioned that some landscaping at the Grove site had been provided by Project Beauty); and new playground equipment at Garvey, Orchard, and Herman Hill Parks.

Mr. Hoetmer continued by saying that approximately \$118,000 has been spent on city pools on projects such as installation of a water slide and renovation of the bathhouse at Evergreen Park, and installation of shade structures at various locations to make pools more family oriented and user-friendly. In addition, he added that over \$177,000 has been spent on pool lighting, which would make it possible to expand pool hours and program evening events at area pools.

There was also discussion concerning renovation of outdoor athletics courts, tennis courts, and indoor basketball courts at the ten recreation centers. Director Kupper mentioned projects such as parking lots and entry drives, park signage and development of a "park logo" which would identify park areas. Mr. Hoetmer mentioned completion of the K-96 bike path from Grove to Oliver and also the Little Arkansas River path from the 13th Street Bridge to 21st Street, (a project initiated by the North Riverside Neighborhood Association), and that both projects were partially funded by Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) grant monies.

Mr. Hoetmer reviewed special projects and budgets for each project including the skatepark (\$525,000); wildlife sculptures along the bike path in Chisholm Creek Park (\$45,000); climbing rock at Meadows Park (\$17,000); the double space net at Stearman Park (\$25,000); and the park shelter, walking path, tree plantings and basketball goals at Leon Robinson Park (\$35,000). He also mentioned that the Leon Robinson park project was unique in that the City had received approximately \$7,500 in donations from the Robinson family for park development.

There was brief discussion concerning the possibility of the skatepark becoming a regional attraction. Director Kupper also mentioned that staff was waiting for park completion to test the ambient lighting from Kellogg. It was also noted that the dedication of the skatepark is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, October 15, 2005.

Mr. Hoetmer concluded the presentation by reviewing upcoming projects such as the canoe launch at the South Arkansas River Greenway; development of the Arkansas River Corridor Access Plan; installation of a new entrance to Watson Park from McLean Blvd.; restoration/renovation of the Steven's Memorial at Veteran's Memorial Park; development of the Grove Park trailhead; and other improvements to Grove Park including installation of concessions and restrooms at the

football fields and development and installation of park entrance signage. There was general discussion concerning several of the projects.

Director Kupper commented that several projects were in the process of being initiated including the Schweiter Park master plan. Leeper asked about the basketball courts at Osage Park. He said he has received complaints concerning the close proximity of the courts to the interactive fountain and the mixing of age groups. Director Kupper reported that the courts are not on the priority list at this time; however, staff has discussed the possibility of moving the basketball courts to where the tennis courts are currently located at the park.

First Vice President Miller mentioned that many CIP projects were several years down the road and that sometimes priorities changed. Director Kupper mentioned that recreation centers did have higher priority because staff could program those facilities for special events or class opportunities. There was brief mention of funding for tennis court replacement, which was non-existent in 2005. Director Kupper stated that it cost approximately \$110,000 to replace a double-court system with post tension concrete.

4. **Discussion of the City's Reforestation Policy.** First Vice President Miller commented that since the Board was concerned with policy issues, she had requested that this item be placed on the agenda. She introduced Tim Martz, Superintendent of Park and Recreation - Forestry and Central Support. Superintendent Martz began his presentation by providing board members a handout that contained the following items: an organizational chart of the Forestry and Central Support Division; six questions and answers regarding the City's reforestation program; and a copy of the systematic pruning/planting plan for park areas.

Superintendent Martz explained that Forestry and Central Support was responsible for all trees in City medians, right-of-ways (ROWS), drainage ways, alleys, and golf courses as well as all park areas. He said 32 full-time staff was assigned to accomplish that task.

Leeper asked who decided which medians and ROWS received beautification. He specifically mentioned areas along West Central. Mr. Martz explained that medians were CIP projects under street improvements, which were administered by Public Works. He added that the Design Council also reviewed all plans.

There was brief discussion. First Vice President Miller commented that more and more of the Park maintenance budget was being spent on care of medians and ROWS. (Staff estimated that approximately 33% of the current maintenance budget is spent on medians and ROWS). She commented that maintenance dollars have remained the same as the City has continued to grow and expand and add more green space. She said this was one of the policy issues the Board needed to discuss. Director Kupper said no one in the City was better qualified to take care of the City's beautification and green space than the Park Department. He commented that staff has adopted several cost saving measures to deal with the issue such as entering into long term leases of the soccer fields at both South Lakes Park and Stryker Soccer Complex. He said maintenance dollars for those areas were transferred into Kellogg ROWS and some park areas. Leeper mentioned the new development near Pawnee Prairie Park. Director Kupper stated that more dollars would be allocated to major arterials into the City rather than subdivisions. Superintendent Martz commented that when he started with the City in 1977; 40 people did the work that 32 people do

now. It was the general consensus that staff was being expected to do a larger job with fewer people.

Superintendent Martz explained that the City is planting smaller trees (1 3/4") and that many of the ROWS are being planted by private contractors, who also perform the 3-year tree establishment program (watering, pruning, etc). He briefly reviewed City tree plantings by year starting in 2000 with 848 trees planted in parks and golf courses and ending in 2005 with 338 trees planted. In addition, he said about 900 trees are added to maintenance each year from contract plantings. He stated that the City removes approximately 800-900 large trees a year. Director Kupper commented that if tree removal is a result of a road project, the department usually gets trees back, unless the project budget is reduced.

Superintendent Martz referred to this year's ice storm, which he said caused tremendous damage to the City's canopy. Director Kupper added that the aftermath of the storm would affect City trees for years to come since many of the trees were damaged and now have open wounds, which allows the spread of disease.

Dennis Brunner mentioned damage cause by road resurfacing crews (the heat from the blacktop literally cooks the trees), particularly along Central and Greenway. Mr. Martz said there was a way that staff could uplift the canopy, if they are notified far enough in advance. Director Kupper mentioned that in Florida contractors were required to shield the tree canopy from heat when laying blacktop. Superintendent Martz said he would explore that option with Public Works.

First Vice President Miller said she knew of at least one member of the public who wanted to comment on the issue:

- Rosa McHenry – read a brief statement stating that trees have always held a special meaning to her. She said she has lived in the Riverside area for twenty years and has seen straight-line winds, heavy snow and ice, and construction take their toll on the trees in Riverside. She said she has observed that the rate of trees being removed far exceeds the number of trees being planted and she is concerned about that. That is why she requested information on the City's reforestation program. She spoke about trees being sanctuary for migratory and local birds as well as the need for shade. She suggested that an intern from one of the local colleges be employed to take a tree census. She concluded by saying that Riverside Park was the jewel of the City's park system.

Superintendent Martz provided board members a "Preferred Tree List". He said the program recommends diversifying tree species, with no species making up more than 10% of the tree population. Director Kupper commented that further discussion of the reforestation issue might be a topic for the orientation/meeting on September 10.

5. **Naming of Park at 11th Street and Indiana – "Walters Memorial Park"**. This item was deferred from the July meeting. Director Kupper reported that the City had actually purchased the land for this park through the McAdams Neighborhood revitalization plan; that the land had not been donated. He said since the Park Board was the official naming committee for parks, the Board may want to suggest other names for the area. Glen Dey suggested that the issue be taken back to the McAdams Neighborhood Association for further suggestions and input. Tranbarger and Kemp agreed, that if the land had not been donated, the Board wasn't under any obligation to

name it as suggested. First Vice President Miller asked if naming the park “Walters Memorial Park” was stipulated in the sales contract. Director Kupper indicated that he would check with Property Management. He also suggested getting input from the District Advisory Board (DAB). First Vice President Miller said another issue was Item #4 in City Council Policy #13, Advisory Committee/Naming of Public Facilities that specifically states, “If the recommendation is a person’s name, it may include only the name of a person who is deceased.” She asked if this person was deceased. Director Kupper said he thought the name was reflective of the entire Walters family, who grew up in the neighborhood. Leeper commented that he liked naming parks after people; they have a history. First Vice President Miller requested that the neighborhood and DAB be requested to provide rationale with any park names they suggest.

6. **Director’s Update.** Director Kupper reported briefly on the following items.

- **CIP** – said that staff would initiate design of the canoe and kayak launch at the South Arkansas River Greenway.
- **Design of Park and Recreation Department Logo** – said staff may have logo samples for Board review at the October meeting. There was discussion concerning making park signage more pronounced. First Vice President Miller also asked that staff include whatever criteria the City requires into the logo design. Director Kupper commented that the wooden, routed signs would probably be around for a while.
- **Operating Budget** – reported that the approved budget would go for second reading next week. First Vice President Miller asked if there had been an increase in the maintenance budget. Director Kupper reported that not only was there no increase in the maintenance budget, but department heads (with the exception of Police and Fire) had been told to incorporate a 1% across the board decrease, which equaled about \$180,000 in the Park budget.
- **O.J. Watson Park** – said staff would initiate projects to repair the roof of the pony riding area; construction of an entry drive off of McLean Blvd.; and repair/renovation of the railroad train.
- **North Ridge Village Addition, Reserve D** – Brunner said he was asked if it was standard practice that when someone donated land for park purposes, they also provided funding for development of the area. Director Kupper responded yes, and said the developer could receive a large tax right off for the value of the donated land and would not have been able to develop the property if the City had not accepted the donated parcel. He said it was not unreasonable to ask that a developer would support improvement of the donated property.
- **Park Board Retreat/Orientation** – said the orientation would take place Saturday, September 10, 2005, beginning at 8:30 am at the Great Plains Nature Center, 6232 E. 29th St. (Woodlawn and 29th Street North). He said there would be a working session of approximately 3-3 ½ hours, followed by lunch (at either Chisholm Creek Park or another outdoor park area, weather permitting) and a tour of park facilities in the afternoon. He asked board members to forward agenda topics to him, as well as tour sites.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 5:20 p.m.

Janet Miller, First Vice President

ATTEST:

Maryann Crockett
Recording Secretary